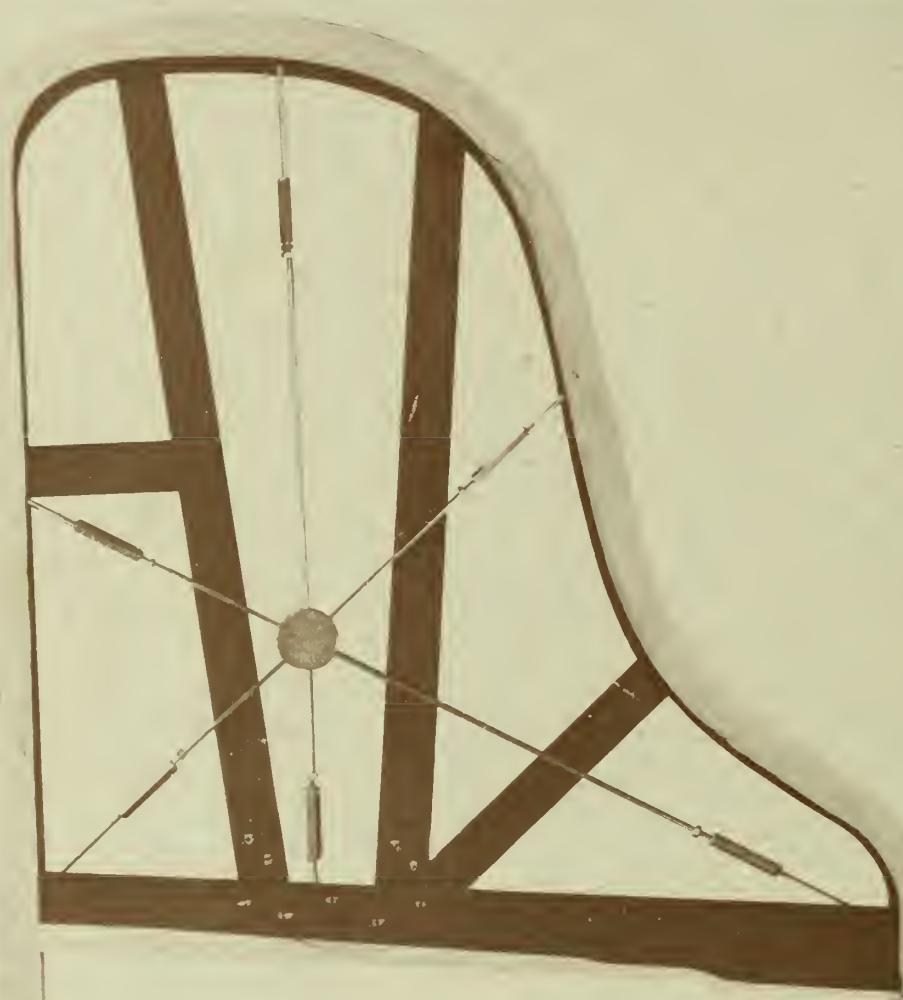


THE  
MAKING OF THE  
*finest*  
PIANO IN THE  
WORLD



Mason & Hamlin



## THE TENSION RESONATOR

*This exclusive feature, invented and perfected by Mason & Hamlin, preserves the piano's glorious resonance and beauty of tone throughout the years*



THE MASON & HAMLIN FACTORY

"IN THE ELDER DAYS OF ART, BUILDERS WROUGHT WITH GREATEST CARE  
EACH MINUTE AND UNSEEN PART, FOR THE GODS SEE EVERYWHERE"

*"The Builders"—Longfellow*

Thus were the ancient Greek artisans guided in their work. Nothing was considered unworthy of the utmost they could provide in skill and completeness of approach. Nowhere was there a detail that could be passed over lightly in a formula that demanded perfection everywhere. (This exalted conception in the creation of a work of art is seen anew in the making of the Mason & Hamlin of today. Not, however, with the object of pleasing the penetrating eye of the gods of Olympus but with the sole desire to create the noblest and finest pianoforte the world has ever known.

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## *Made in the Atmosphere of a Great Studio Laboratory*

THE building where the Mason & Hamlin is made is not a factory in the ordinary sense. To be sure one will find there the marvelous machinery and the scientific methods of discovering the vibrant quality of woods, the tensile strength of wire, the density or resisting power of this or that material which, wrought into its appointed form by skilled hands, takes its place as a part of the Mason & Hamlin, but the atmosphere of the sunny rooms of this building is that of a great laboratory or studio where an organization of craftsmen perform their daily tasks with a devotion and pride that finds but few parallels in modern industry.

The men who make the Mason & Hamlin are

passionate seekers of perfection. It is not incongruous to say that it is the product of a concept of art as pure and lofty as has ever been brought to the creation of any other masterpiece.

The oldest, active worker in years of service has devoted over forty years of his life to the building of these instruments. Many others, now at the heads of their respective departments, have served in the manufacture of fine pianos previous to joining the Mason & Hamlin family, essential to a continued vitality for the future, who have acquired, through close association, the high ideals and intensive knowledge of these veteran artisans.



*Peter Mohr and Allen Harrah with the original Mason & Hamlin blueprints and pattern.*

## AKIN TO THE STRADIVARIUS VIOLIN IN THE NOBILITY OF ITS CONCEPTION

The Mason & Hamlin has been called "The Stradivarius of Pianos." Antonio Stradivari made violins in Cremona, Italy, two hundred years ago. He brought his delicate craft to the highest point of perfection and his instruments became the standard by which all subsequent efforts in violin making are judged. The Stradivarius violins existing today are in the hands of the greatest masters of their art. Treasured beyond price, each one is known for its individual and transcendent beauty of tone and construction. ¶ There is unquestionably an analogy between the Mason & Hamlin and the creations of the immortal violin maker of Cremona. Both are the creation of master builders of noblest ideals. Both have attained an uncompanioned pinnacle of perfection. The Stradivarius violins are the finest known. The Mason & Hamlin is what its creators plan it to be, the most magnificent piano in the world.

PIANO manufacture is not an exact science. In the making of fine pianos scientific knowledge, while essential, carries the operation only so far. Beyond that the maker is dealing in art, and it is the art of the individual. Hence in the making of the Mason & Hamlin the personal equation is all important. There are individuals of long experience and thoroughly trained in those peculiar processes and methods that are responsible for the individual tone quality that has won this great piano its fame.

In the manufacture of the Mason & Hamlin there are an infinite number of details each one of which has a

bearing upon the tone result. All of these details are interrelated, each assuring a form and substance, so to speak, important to the result only when fitting the form and substance of other details. While the *scale* of a piano is a highly important basic factor in the tone result the *scale* is only the foundation. It is the subject and outline of the picture upon which the individual artist must spread his pigment to produce the tone colors he desires.

That piano making is an art is proven by the fact that it is no more possible to copy a fine piano, and get the same tone result, than it is to copy the work, of a

great artist with a perfection that is beyond detection by experts.

It is important to realize that the Mason & Hamlin is a work of art which is not prohibitive in price, only because of the happy circumstance that those who created it are able to duplicate it. And this process continued over a period of years is duplication only in the sense that each piano represents the supreme effort of a group of sincere craftsmen.

The continuation of such effort naturally results in improvement, constant progress toward that goal of every sincere artisan who builds for quality and durability regardless of cost — *the goal of perfection.*

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**TO**NE Every piano has a soundboard. Its function is to receive and amplify vibrations of the strings when the instrument is played. All soundboards do this more or less effectively. The design and construction of a soundboard system may be simple or difficult according to the results demanded. Mediocrity is easily obtained. In seeking perfection, however, there must be minute attention to the subtlest detail regardless of cost in time or effort.

Perfection and beauty of tone depend not alone upon the correct layout of the stringing of the scale but also

upon the degree in which the soundboard responds to the string vibrations over its entire range. The Mason & Hamlin soundboard design is a development of many years of painstaking care and scientific findings of experienced tonal experts. Rigid specifications cover the origin, age and variety of the spruce of which it is made. Careful selection determines the choice of wood of proper color, density and texture. Thoroughly seasoned in successive temperature changes, the board is planed, sanded and tempered to a precise formula until it is ready for crowning and the attaching of its ribs and bridges.

Selection of exactly the proper stock for these ribs and bridges, and the scientifically correct method of gluing these parts to the board in especially built pneumatic presses, the shaping to just the right height and contour, hand fitting and mortising, contribute further to the glory of the finished product.

Unseen and covered parts on the underside of the board receive the same attention and care in workmanship as is given to the most prominent and exposed section.

Each piano is regarded as an individual task. Limits of measurements are definitely set, standards are high, but the workmanship is that of the artist-craftsman and not that of the routine mass-producer. The result is the soundboard of maximum responsiveness and durability demanded by Mason & Hamlin standards.



*"Bellyman" David Poirier installs the plates.*



*Brad Laplante checks the soundboard.*



*"Rewarding Labor Bringing to the Artisan a Glowing Sense  
of the Supreme Quality of his Creation"*

**TOUCH** As the pianist touches the keys of the piano does the tone coming from its sonorous body meet his desires and expectations? Are his mood and feelings finding complete expression in the awakened voice of the instrument? That depends upon the responsiveness of that wonderful mechanism which transmits the impulse of his fingers to the strings—the Action. Excellent though the rest of the piano may be, it would be a poor medium of musical and poetic expression were its action not equally perfect.

Developed exclusively for Mason & Hamlin and built to their exacting specifications by the most renowned German maker, the Renner action is exquisitely adjusted to a perfect coordination of every part and is completely satisfying to the most exacting and discriminating musician. Instant response, limitless power and perfect control in the most delicate pianissimo passages are all at the command of the performer.

To hear a Mason & Hamlin is a delight to the musically appreciate ear—to play upon it is to experience the ultimate in a medium of musical expression.

**STRINGS** The human element is a great factor in this important stage in piano's journey through the factory. Eighty-eight notes to be strung, over two hundred and twenty strings to be selected, covered and cut by hand and no two exactly alike, every one differing from every other in some dimensions. Thirty-five changes and combinations of wire sizes to be directed to their proper place. Two hundred and twenty or more holes to be prepared in the rock maple pin block for the tuning pins, to be reamed with the greatest accuracy and as many pins to be coil wrapped and driven and turned into place. The stringer must combine muscular strength and power of wrist with extreme sensitiveness of touch for his work goes far in the making of Mason & Hamlin durability.

**INTERIOR** The interior of this great piano consists of several units, most of them ultimately concealed within the instrument but finished and planned as one of the unseen parts described in Longfellow's eloquent lines, which must

reach the same exalted plane of perfection demanded in every part of the Mason & Hamlin. Even before any finish is applied, every corner and crevice is brought to a silky smoothness and every joint is tested and inspected. The wood which goes into the various parts is chosen from specimens of perfect grain and fibre so that it may perfectly fulfill its function in that marvelous coordination of parts which is the Mason & Hamlin.



## *The Tension Resonator*

This outstanding and exclusive feature invented and developed by Mason & Hamlin preserves its glorious resonance and beauty of tone after many years of hard use — long beyond the average of even many of the best pianos. It is a permanent built-in feature and is *not* intended as a means of adjustment at any time in the life of the piano. The Tension Resonator is set in place and adjusted once for all. It is never touched but is working continuously day and night insuring the continuation of the piano's original and unforgettable beauty.



*Wilfredo Rivera carefully installs each string.*



*Hunyib Le gives each piano its final polish.*



*Ken Long prepares the soundboard.*



*"The Criterion of True Beauty is that it Increases upon Examination—if False it Lessens"—GREVILLE*

**BEAUTY** The beauty of the Mason & Hamlin is not merely skin deep. The impulse behind its making endows every part, seen and unseen, with the individual and penetrating beauty that is inseparable from a task perfectly performed. The case-maker, the man who casts the iron plate, the string-winder, see beauty in the finished product that comes from their hands. The myriad parts of the action working in perfect coordination are beautiful to the action-makers, and so throughout every part of the completed instrument.

The exterior beauty of the Mason & Hamlin is seen in the graceful lines of its design and the finish of the exquisite wood of which its case is made. Whether it be one of the catalogue models or the most elaborate period design the finish is that of fine wood grown mellow with the richness and unclouded beauty of grain seen in precious old furniture.

**CONCLUSION** So it is that in each and every contributing detail, however minute, there is found a perfection that makes the finished Mason & Hamlin *sui generis*, (in a class by itself) unmatched in the glory of its tone and surpassing durability.

It is a rewarding labor bringing to the artisan a glowing sense of the supreme quality of his creation, and to the owner of a Mason & Hamlin a security and satisfaction in its possession that no other piano can give.

It is obvious that the makers of the Mason & Hamlin must make fewer pianos than other manufacturers. The price of the Mason & Hamlin is, determined by the cost to produce it. It is a supreme instrument—a piano for the connoisseur and it is in the patronage of those whose selection is based on their own sure knowledge and appreciation that the makers of the Mason & Hamlin find their reward.

# Mason & Hamlin

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